

# The Effect of Loose Parts on the Development of Early Childhood Creativity

Marisa Sardi<sup>1</sup>, Farida Mayar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; msardi42@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; mayarfarida@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

Creativity is a child's ability that should be developed early on. Loose parts are open items which are easily found in the daily environment. This research was conducted at TK PAUD Seulanga Meuligoe Selatan. This study aims to describe learning outcomes with loose part activities that can affect children's creativity. Case study research is a type of qualitative research that was used by the researchers in this study. Children between the ages of 0 and 5 are the focus of this study. Observation, short conversations, and keeping records are all ways that data are gathered. The results of a study show that kids can be more creative when they do loose-part tasks. Children learn to be active, creative, and curious when they build with loose parts. They also learn how to fix problems. From previously, children only reached undeveloped (BB) and started to develop (MB) levels to growing as expected (BSH) and very well developed (BSB). Besides that, loose part activities make children recognize objects around their environment.

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## Corresponding Author:

Marisa Sardi  
Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; msardi42@gmail.com

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is an educational forum that is oriented towards child development, starting from the development of moral, religious values, physical values, socio-emotional, linguistic, cognitive and artistic. Therefore, children really need the right stimulus to help them grow and develop optimally. One of the crucial skills for early childhood in the 21st century is the development of creativity (Komariyah et al., 2021). Creativity enables children to build something new and combine existing views using new ideas. This creativity develops when children participate daily in activities that involve movement, dramatic play, and visual arts (Nurjanah, 2020). This is in line with (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) that creativity is the main ability for cognitive development. That is why in early childhood education, creativity is the most important.

Many problems occur related to increasing children's creativity, one of which is the lack of facilities or learning media. This is as explained by (Baker et al., 2021), that children cannot be creative independently. They still depend on what is modelled by the teacher. Creativity has the ability for a variety of all children's potential to express emotions, and accept something new in relation to using learning. Empowering the environment to be a place to explore or search with children who are the main role of various creativity as well as skills using unique and interesting learning methods.

Creativity is the potential of children that must be explored as early as possible. All individuals have creative abilities. Through the field of education children's creative abilities can be improved, so they must be fostered as early as possible (Bafadal et al., 2019). Through structured and harmonized play activities based on the age group of growth and development, children's creative potential will develop optimally (Zhang et al., 2020). In developing children's creativity, educators should carry out learning with methods, and sources must use suitable sources and methods so that the educator's intention to develop creativity abilities can be carried out perfectly.

Creativity is a manifestation of a human's ability and is useful for the development of others. Using creativity will make people improve their quality of life. (Mayar, 2021). There is an appropriate way to improve creativity skills by using loose-part activities. Children's creative ideas arise when the child is doing loose part activities, because children are given the opportunity to decide what kind of play activities will be carried out, and freely create their creations through various loose part materials that are available. Children can also work on their creation synchronously using their own imagination and it is not recommended to do activities only focused on LKA media with activity activities that have been designed by educators, and children only do what has been provided (Harun & Melita, 2022).

Loose parts are exposed loose objects commonly found in the surrounding environment. The surrounding nature is rich with loose parts such as branches, cones, bark, leaves, stones, flowers and other natural objects. Educators and parents can pick up loose parts anywhere for free. Loose parts not only support children's development but also help them connect with their environment (Farikhah et al., 2022). Open-ended removable objects are easy to find in the environment for free, but give children a place to express their creativity using free material objects to give children the opportunity to test and be creative to explore. The loose parts theory was originally introduced by Nicholson in 1971 and is based on the idea of providing a platform for children to express their creativity using natural tools and materials that can be moved, manipulated and recreated, as well as objects that are easy to find (Safitri & Lestarinigrum, 2021). Loose parts consist of several materials and can be used for children's learning: (a) natural raw materials; (b) metal; (c) plastic; (d) bamboo as well as wood; (e) glass and ceramics; (f) fabric and yarn; (g) used packaging (Imamah & Muqowim, 2020) Children can build a place or create an activity through their imagination with the ingredients available. have "loose parts" available at the playroom allows children to use materials it is according to their choice (M. D. W. Putri et al., 2019).

There is no high cost to employing free items found in the environment for educational purposes. Natural-based, wood-reuse, plastic, metal, ceramic, cloth, and packaging are the seven categories that make up the loose part. (1) Natural materials. This material is easily found in the surrounding environment, namely gravel, stone, water, soil, seeds, fruit, feathers, bark, wood chips, rubber, flowers, sand and mud. (2) Wood or wooden base, derived from blocks, boards, sticks, flutes, chairs, bamboo slats and others. (3) Plastic, namely plastic bottles, hoses, funnels, buckets, whistles and others. (4) Metal and metal, namely spoons, forks, hairpins, cans, kitchen utensils, keys and others. (5) Ceramics, namely jugs, jars, glass bottles, marbles, roof tiles and others. (6) Fabric or yarn and cloth. Rope, silk thread, woollen thread, various fabrics, ribbon thread, rubber, cotton, and pompoms can be used as loose parts made of fabric or thread. Seventh, packaging or scrap and packaging. Available packaging materials include cartons, tissue paper rolls, wire rolls, food, egg trays, cardboard cutouts, gifts, cereal boxes and other cardboard packaging boxes (M. A. Putri et al., 2021).

With the help of loose media, it aims to develop and enhance the development of children's creativity to express ideas and opinions, creative thinking, creative ability and export better work, as well as produce successors with ideal growth and development for the skills needed now and in the future (Lestari & Halim, 2022). Educators' efforts to develop creativity in early childhood by using the right system and media for children's characteristics make the teaching and learning process more diverse, increasing children's desire to learn. However, research findings (Qomariyah & Qalbi, 2021) show that PAUD teachers still do not understand loose part games. As previously explained, the right teaching and learning method is used by educators to develop early childhood creativity with the loose part activity method. However, research has been conducted by (Zhang et al., 2020) and (Qomariyah & Qalbi, 2021)

on loose part training. Among the obstacles faced in early childhood is the lack of a variety of learning methods that will be able to have a negative impact and inhibit creativity in early childhood. It is very important that loose part learning is applied to early childhood creativity in daily learning. Research on STEAM learning based on loose parts has been conducted by (Wahyuningsih et al., 2020) and by (Nurjanah, 2020).

Based on the results of preliminary observations at TK PAUD Seulanga Meuligoe Selatan, class B children appear to lack the creative power possessed by children in the use of learning media to improve children's creativity, including children lacking to develop imagination and new ideas in learning activities, visual and interpersonal skills are very lacking. Furthermore, it can also be seen that when teachers provide material about creativity, they still use less interesting media, such as LKA (Children's Worksheet), drawing paper, blocks, and synthetic toys, make children's creativity look undeveloped because children only sit still to complete activities on LKA that have been provided by educators and make children bored. Research on loose-part media has also been conducted by (Lestari & Halim, 2022) and by (Imamah & Muqowim, 2020). However, in contrast to previous research, this study aims to observe whether there is a real influence of loose parts activities on the development of creativity in early childhood. The main thing in this research is that children's developing creativity is influenced by the loose part activities produced by children.

## 2. METHODS

This research was conducted at TK PAUD Seulanga Meuligoe Selatan. The method used in this research is to use qualitative research methods using the type of case study research. The subjects of this research are early childhood as many as 5 people. The data collection methods used are: a) observation, this method is useful for informing an overview of the development of children's creativity. a process that is composed of various biological and psychological processes, namely between observation and memory (Sugiyono, 2010)(Sugiyono, 2016); b) short interviews, to obtain information through questions and answers between two people about the development of creativity in loose parts activities. An interview is a meeting of two people to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers, so that meaning can be constructed on a certain topic (Sugiyono, 2015); and 3) documentation is to collect information about early childhood creativity in the form of photos and videos. Researchers took data sources from children's play activities and children's work which were then documented directly as important information and also explained based on children's stories. Research data processing is carried out systematically so that the success of the data can be used to draw conclusions. With this technique, we can find out whether loose part media is effective in increasing creativity in early childhood.

This research method intends to present a complete picture of the social setting and clarify an event or environmental reality, especially in early childhood (Einarsdottir, 2005). The description of several variables related to the problem or entity under study. Qualitative research provides recorded and verbal descriptions of child development that can be noticed in the school environment. As part of this study, we investigated whether learning media in loose parts can enhance children's creativity. (Kagas et al., 2012). The following are the steps of the research conducted:

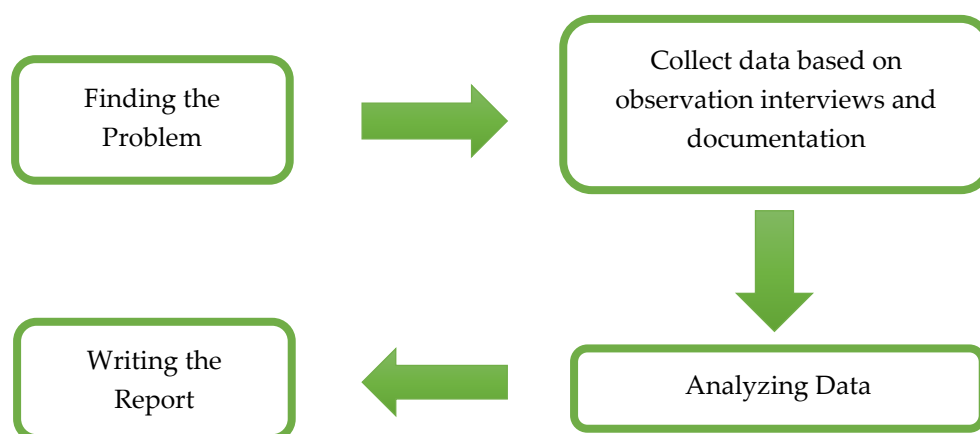


Figure 1 . Research Steps

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIO

#### 3.1 Background of the Research Subject

“IN 1: First, interviews with the class teacher of the research subject to obtain research data, namely a child “RH” (5 years old) whose father's background is working as a school principal and his mother's work as a housewife. RH, when at school, looks less active and creative it appears that during learning activities, RH only waits for instructions from educators without any initiative to do it himself. According to the teacher that the researcher interviewed, he once talked to RH's mother, it turns out that RH only plays gadgets at home without time limit.

“IN 2: In the second child, an interview was conducted with the teacher to obtain information about the child “AD”. (5 years old), with a background of self-employed father and mother a high school teacher. During learning activities at school AD seemed silent and did not dare to express his ideas when the educator asked about the activities to be carried out, AD seemed afraid and hesitant to answer the question”.

IN 3: “Then in the third child, EYS (5 years old), the father's job is a policeman and the mother's job is a housewife. The case is when skill learning activities take place, the child is seen imitating existing shapes, the child does not dare to try to make other shapes. He is not used to creating unique shapes from his own ideas”.

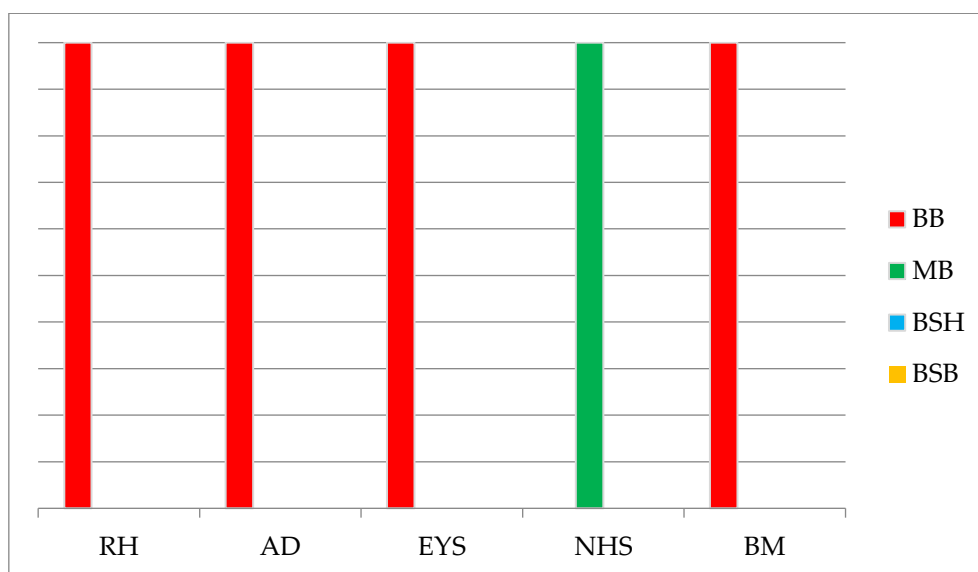
IN 4: “The fourth child, NHS (6 years old), had a civil servant father and an elementary school teacher mother. With the case of NHS, when doing drawing activities, NHS only follows the usual colors that already exist and has not been able to combine the latest colors”.

Furthermore, the fifth child, BM (5 years old), whose father works as a private BANK employee and mother's job as a housewife. The case of BM is that BM often imitates the examples given by educators and is unable to complete the activity within the pre-determined time.

Creativity, as defined by (Santrock, 2007), is the capacity to generate new ideas through synthesising and rearranging already established concepts. Creative kids will demonstrate a willingness to take risks and a conviction in the validity of their own alternatives. According to Nurjanah and Wahyuseptiana (2018), who define creativity as the “ability to think to combine old ideas with new ideas in order to create a new understanding,” this view is consistent with the evidence.

#### 3.2 Observation result

The results of data collection from the initial observation technique carried out at Seulanga Meuligoe Selatan PAUD Kindergarten obtained a collection of data that displays the achievement of 5-6 years of development related to children's creativity can be seen from the diagram below.



**Figure 2.** Achievement of children's creativity development at 5-6 years old

Description :

Child's initials : RH, AD, EYS, NHS, BM

BB : Undeveloped

MB : Starting to Develop

BSH : Developing as Expected

BSB : Developing Very Well

Based on Figure 2, it can be seen that the achievement of children's creativity development is still in the red and green lines, namely BB (Undeveloped) and MB (Starting to Develop), children show that children's creativity abilities are still low before carrying out loose part activities. The factor of low creativity is because the media that teachers usually use is more with children's worksheets (LKA). Improving children's creativity requires effective learning media such as media for loose parts activities so that is one of the learning media that has not been applied to children's creativity. TK PAUD Seulanga Meuligoe Selatan.

The results of the initial observations made by researchers found many children with low creativity skills. Many children still follow their friends when doing an activity. Children tend to follow existing examples rather than thinking about creating a shape. Researchers provide loose part play activities in group B2 of TK PAUD Seulanga Meuligoe Selatan, totaling 5 people. The loose part media provided are lolak eyes and small shells because considering the media that are easily found by children because of the location of the school near the beach and the bottle caps of bottled drinks that are found by many children.

Early childhood is an individual who needs to be stimulated or encouraged properly regarding growth and development. Based on the results of research in TK PAUD Seulanga Meuligoe Selatan, Loose parts media is one of the most effective tools for the development of children's creativity, because the versatile nature of tools and materials makes it a special allure for children. Therefore, loose parts become a way out by educators to encourage children's creativity.



**Figure 3.** Children doing loose parts activity

Children do activities using loose parts of media that are around the child's environment, with loose parts activities able to improve the development of early childhood creativity at TK PAUD Seulangan Melingoe by completing all steps of using loose parts media. Children look enthusiastic in exploring various components around them and/or completing learning activities using loose parts media.

### **3.3 Interview Results with Educators**

Based on the results of interviews with group B2 educators, educators say loose part activities have not been implemented due to the limited knowledge of educators and the lack of training held evenly for all educators in the school, as well as the factor of educators who are not from AUD education but from other education. However, they are still trying to develop and implement loose-part activities and collaborate with other colleagues and the principal to learn children's creativity at school. Loose-part activities become an activity that can increase children's creativity.

The educator also said that during the exploration stage, the children were very enthusiastic and eager to explore and explore the objects or components provided. The children observed and explored these components themselves, and then decided which components they wanted to use and what they wanted to wear.

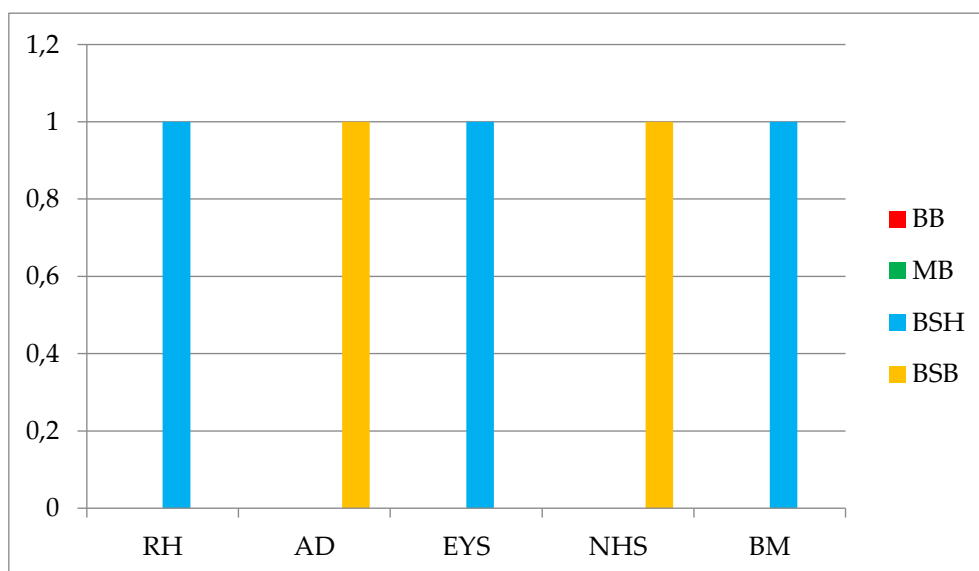


**Figure 4.** Children discussing making a shape

The teacher also explained that in the learning process, educators apply educational guidance steps by presenting the rules of the game, cleaning rules and how to store items to children, and usually teachers guide children and help them make rules before doing game activities. In Figure 3, children are seen discussing with friends about the shapes that will be created by combining with existing materials and tools.

### 3.4 Social Behavior When Children Do Loose Part Activities

Loose-part activities make children active, creative, have high curiosity and are able to solve problems. This can be observed when children are given the freedom to explore with the available media, then children are seen to be able to create a shape that is different from other friends from loose part media. The work that children produce from the combination of the media provided produces an impressive shape for children is part of the creativity that begins to form in children. Children's positive social behaviors were evident in waiting their turn, leadership, cooperation, decision-making, problem-solving, curiosity and others. The most common negative behaviors were babbling and bossiness. Environmental factors with loose part materials do not limit children's play and who they interact with. It encourages children to engage in social interaction and play with peers at a higher level, flexibility and equality.



**Figure 5.** Achievement table after being given the loose part media activity

It can be seen in Figure 4 that the level of children's achievement has increased from previously at the BB (Undeveloped) and MB (Starting to Develop) levels to the BSH (Developing As Expected) and BSB (Developing Very Well) levels. Children's creativity can increase through several factors, namely family, school, motivation and environment, by paying attention to these factors can help teachers and parents in developing children's creativity according to their level of development. However, the factors that increase children's creativity in this study by playing loose parts media, by playing have a clear purpose according to their needs. This can be seen from the activities carried out by children who try to make several different shapes, such as: 1) Making cars, planes, trucks; 2) Making houses, and rooms, 3) Making celestial objects such as the moon, stars, sun. In line with the opinion (Hurlock, 1987) play is an activity carried out with the aim of obtaining pleasure without considering the final result. Children's creativity after implementing loose parts activities has increased and children are creative. With loose parts, children will learn by experimenting and exploring something (M. A. Putri et al., 2021). Children have four main advantages by playing loose parts, namely: 1) develop intelligence

skills; 2) Encourage children to ask questions; 3) Development of various aspects of child development; 4) Develop imagination and creativity (Siantajani, 2021).

The use of loose parts is very effective in encouraging children's creativity, loose parts can be used to make various interesting works for children, in addition to materials that are easily found in the surrounding area. This loose-part media is designed to encourage children's creativity in playing creatively, expressing ideas, expressing opinions and exploring according to the child's wishes. Loose Part can make children's high curiosity come from children, children's curiosity is an important element in developing inquisitive thinking ability and training children to ask questions. Children can not only have physical skills, but also solve problems and take risks when children actively look for necessary things or creatively use their fingers to create something (Fransiska & Yenita, 2021). Loose parts gives children the freedom to explore and try something new.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted in TK PAUD Seulanga Meuligoe Selatan It can be concluded that children's creativity can be increased by doing loose part activities. With loose part activities, children become active, creative, have high curiosity and are able to solve problems. From previously children only reached the BB and MB levels to BSH and BSB, besides that with loose part activities making children recognize objects around their environment. As evidenced by children who make varied and different shapes according to their imagination. The limitations in this study were that the sampling process was carried out only at TK PAUD Seulanga Meuligoe Selatan, and the development of creativity obtained was only seen from loose parts activities. It is necessary to conduct more in-depth research, clarify and provide updated findings related to loose parts and the development of early childhood creativity.

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